(c) what steps are being taken to get it expedited ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL) : (a) and (b) The project was sanctioned in 1981-82. Section from Jammu Tawi to Bajalta (11.75 Kms.) completed and commissioned. However, the work could not be completed due to constraint of resources, Geo-technical problems and adverse law and order situation.

(c) Necessary funds as required are being provided to complete the work expeditiously.

Loss due to Tourist Train in Gujarat

2095. SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that introduction of Royal Orient, a tourist train, on Gujarat-Rajasthan MG section, resulted in a loss of Rs. 13.73 crore during 1994—2000;

(b) if so, what is the quantum of loss during the year 2000-2001;

(c) what is Government's reaction in this regard;

(d) whether the economic viability assessment of the tourist train was not gauged before introduction of the train; and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL) : (a) and (b) As per audit of Western Railway, a loss of Rs. 13.73 crores has been shown on account of 'Royal Orient Express'. The Railway does not compute losses incurred on this service on annual basis.

(c) The Royal Orient Express was planned not on financial viability alone, but also with objectives of promoting tourism, creating job opportunities and earn foreign exchange for the country. The breakeven for such a train has a long gestation period.

(d) and (e) This train was run from surplus metre gauge coaches of Rajasthan's Palace on Wheels, which after gauge conversion from MG to BG in that sector is run by BG coaches. Due to natural calamities like plague epidemic in Gujarat, recent earthquake and economic recession, the expected tourist traffic did not materialize. A review has been done to minimize the cost of operation of this train.

Unproductive Railway Zones

2096. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA :
DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the seven new Railway Zones are proving unproductive;

(b) if so, the names of those Zones and the expenditure being incurred on them;

(c) whether the CAG Report of March, 2000 had remarked that creation of the new Railway Zones would lead to unproductive investment; and

(d) if so, what measures have been taken by Government to make them productive?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL) : (a) No, Sir. The seven new Railway zones are yet to become operational. The expenditure incurred so far on creation of these seven zones has been meagre in view of the resource crunch being faced by the Railways. Therefore, the question of their being unproductive does not arise.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The question of productivity of new zones will arise only after they are operationalised depending upon the availability of resources for this purpose.